

CLAIMS

1 1. A method in a computer system for delivering advertising to a user, the method
2 comprising:

3 identifying the user;
4 selecting at least one character for the user;
5 selecting a message to be delivered by said at least one character to the user;
6 selecting an advertisement from a plurality of advertisements;
7 integrating said selected advertisement with said selected message to be delivered by
8 said at least one character; and
9 presenting said at least one character to the user wherein said at least one character
10 conveys said selected message integrated with said selected advertisement.

1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein said integrating step comprises the step of
2 adding words of said selected advertisement to words of said selected message.

1 3. The method of claim 1 wherein said integrating step comprises the step of
2 providing a background image for presenting said at least one character.

1 4. The method of claim 1 wherein said selecting an advertisement step comprises
2 the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one characteristic of the
3 user.

1 5. The method of claim 1 wherein said selecting an advertisement step comprises
2 the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one characteristic of said at
3 least one character.

1 6. The method of claim 1 wherein said selecting an advertisement step comprises
2 the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one previous conversation
3 between said at least one character and the user.

1 7. The method of claim 1 wherein said selecting an advertisement step comprises
2 selecting said advertisement randomly.

1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein said selected message is delivered in a
2 language that is selected based on at least one characteristic of the user.

1 9. The method of claim 1 wherein at least two advertisements are selected and
2 integrated into said selected message.

1 10. The method of claim 1 wherein said delivery of said selected message as
2 displayed text or audio output is based on at least one characteristic of the user.

1 11. The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one character is presented only as
2 audio output.

1 12. The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one character is presented via a
2 wireless device.

1 13. The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one character is presented via a
2 telephone.

1 14. The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one character is a rendered
2 character that is one of a cartoon character, a person, an animal, and a non-living object.

1 15. The method of claim 1 wherein the computer system is a gaming device.

1 16. The method of claim 1 wherein said presenting step comprises the step of
2 sending said at least one character to convey said selected message integrated with said
3 selected advertisement from a server computer to a user computer via a communication link.

1 17. The method of claim 1 wherein said presenting step comprises the step of
2 displaying an image of said at least one character.

1 18. The method of claim 1 wherein said selected message is delivered as displayed
2 text.

1 19. The method of claim 18 wherein said displayed text is shown in a bubble near
2 the displayed image of said at least one character.

1 20. The method of claim 1 wherein said selected message is delivered as audio
2 output.

1 21. The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one character presented delivers
2 said selected message during a conversation.

1 22. The method of claim 21 wherein said conversation is with at least two of said
2 at least one character.

1 23. The method of claim 21 wherein said conversation is with the user.

1 24. The method of claim 21 wherein the user participates interactively in said
2 conversation with said at least one character.

1 25. The method of claim 1 wherein said selecting an advertisement step comprises
2 the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one advertising
3 requirement.

1 26. The method of claim 25 wherein said at least one advertising requirement is to
2 present said selected advertisement during a certain percentage of user sessions.

1 27. The method of claim 25 wherein said advertising requirement is to present
2 said selected advertisement at a certain frequency.

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1 28. A method in a computer system for delivering advertising to a user, the method
2 comprising:

3 selecting a message to be delivered by at least one character to the user;

4 selecting an advertisement from a plurality of advertisements;

5 integrating said selected advertisement with said selected message; and

6 presenting said at least one character to the user wherein said at least one character
7 conveys said selected message integrated with said selected advertisement.

1 29. The method of claim 28 wherein said message is selected during a
2 conversation in which said at least one character is engaged.

1 30. The method of claim 28 wherein said advertisement is selected when said at
2 least one character is presented to the user.

1 31. The method of claim 28 wherein said advertisement is dynamically selected.

1 32. The method of claim 28 wherein said integrating step comprises the step of
2 adding words of said selected advertisement to words of said selected message.

1 33. The method of claim 28 wherein said integrating step comprises the step of
2 providing a background image for presenting said at least one character.

1 34. The method of claim 28 wherein said selecting an advertisement step
2 comprises the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one characteristic
3 of the user.

1 35. The method of claim 28 wherein said selecting an advertisement step
2 comprises the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one characteristic
3 of said at least one character.

1 36. The method of claim 28 wherein said selecting an advertisement step
2 comprises the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one previous
3 conversation between said at least one character and the user.

1 37. The method of claim 28 wherein said selecting an advertisement step
2 comprises selecting said advertisement randomly.

1 38. The method of claim 28 wherein said selected message is delivered in a
2 language that is selected based on at least one characteristic of the user.

1 39. The method of claim 28 wherein at least two advertisements are selected and
2 integrated into said selected message.

1 40. The method of claim 28 wherein said delivery of said selected message as
2 displayed text or audio output is based on at least one characteristic of the user.

1 41. The method of claim 28 wherein said at least one character is presented only as
2 audio output.

1 42. The method of claim 28 wherein said at least one character is presented via a
2 wireless device.

1 43. The method of claim 28 wherein said at least one character is presented via a
2 telephone.

1 44. The method of claim 28 wherein said at least one character is a rendered
2 character that is one of a cartoon character, a person, an animal, and a non-living object.

1 45. The method of claim 28 wherein the computer system is a gaming device.

1 46. The method of claim 28 wherein said presenting step comprises the step of
2 sending said at least one character to convey said selected message integrated with said
3 selected advertisement from a server computer to a user computer via a communication link.

1 47. The method of claim 28 wherein said presenting step comprises the step of
2 displaying an image of said at least one character.

1 48. The method of claim 28 wherein said selected message is delivered as
2 displayed text.

1 49. The method of claim 48 wherein said displayed text is shown in a bubble near
2 the displayed image of said at least one character.

1 50. The method of claim 28 wherein said selected message is delivered as audio
2 output.

1 51. The method of claim 28 wherein said at least one character presented delivers
2 said selected message during a conversation.

1 52. The method of claim 51 wherein said conversation is with at least two of said
2 at least one character.

1 53. The method of claim 51 wherein said conversation is with the user.

1 54. The method of claim 51 wherein the user participates interactively in said
2 conversation with said at least one character.

1 55. The method of claim 28 wherein said selecting an advertisement step
2 comprises the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one advertising
3 requirement.

1 56. The method of claim 55 wherein said at least one advertising requirement is to
2 present said selected advertisement during a certain percentage of user sessions.

1 57. The method of claim 55 wherein said advertising requirement is to present
2 said selected advertisement at a certain frequency.

[illegible]

1 58. A method in a computer system for advertising during presentation of at least
2 one character engaged in a conversation, the conversation including a series of messages, the
3 method comprising:

4 during the conversation when the series of messages is to be delivered by the at least
5 one character, selecting an advertisement from a plurality of advertisements;

6 integrating said selected advertisement into said series of messages; and

7 controlling the delivery of said series of messages integrated with said selected
8 advertisement by the at least one character.

1 59. The method of claim 58 wherein said advertisement is dynamically selected.

1 60. The method of claim 58 wherein said integrating step comprises the step of
2 adding words of said selected advertisement to words of the series of messages .

1 61. The method of claim 58 wherein said integrating step comprises the step of
2 providing a background image for presenting the at least one character.

1 62. The method of claim 58 wherein said selecting an advertisement step
2 comprises the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one characteristic
3 of the user.

1 63. The method of claim 58 wherein said selecting an advertisement step
2 comprises the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one characteristic
3 of the at least one character.

1 64. The method of claim 58 wherein said selecting an advertisement step
2 comprises the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one previous
3 conversation between the at least one character and the user.

1 65. The method of claim 58 wherein the series of messages is delivered in a
2 language that is selected based on at least one characteristic of the user.

1 66. The method of claim 58 wherein said controlling the delivery of the series of
2 messages as displayed text or audio output is based on at least one characteristic of the user.

1 67. The method of claim 58 wherein the at least one character is presented only as
2 audio output.

1 68. The method of claim 58 wherein the at least one character is presented via a
2 wireless device.

1 69. The method of claim 58 wherein the at least one character is presented via a
2 telephone.

1 70. The method of claim 58 wherein the at least one character is a rendered
2 character that is one of a cartoon character, a person, an animal, and a non-living object.

1 71. The method of claim 58 wherein the computer system is a gaming device.

1 72. The method of claim 58 wherein said controlling step comprises the step of
2 sending the at least one character to convey the series of messages integrated with said
3 selected advertisement from a server computer to a user computer via a communication link.

1 73. The method of claim 58 wherein said presenting step comprises the step of
2 displaying an image of the at least one character.

1 74. The method of claim 58 wherein the conversation is with at least two of the at
2 least one character.

1 75. The method of claim 58 wherein the conversation is with the user.

1 76. The method of claim 58 wherein the user participates interactively in the
2 conversation with the at least one character.

1 77. The method of claim 58 wherein the series of messages is delivered as audio
2 output.

1 78. The method of claim 58 wherein the series of messages is delivered as
2 displayed text.

1 79. The method of claim 78 wherein said displayed text is shown in a bubble near
2 the displayed image of the at least one character.

1 80. The method of claim 58 wherein said selecting an advertisement step
2 comprises the step of basing said selecting of said advertisement on at least one advertising
3 requirement.

1 81. The method of claim 80 wherein said at least one advertising requirement is to
2 present said selected advertisement during a certain percentage of user sessions.

1 82. The method of claim 80 wherein said advertising requirement is to present
2 said selected advertisement at a certain frequency.

1 83. A system for delivering advertising to a user, the system comprising:
2 at least one server computer having an interface for communicating over a
3 computer network to the user, said at least one server computer further comprising;
4 an advertisement system contained within a computer usable medium
5 having computer readable program code embodied therein, said advertisement
6 system further comprising;
7 an advertisement component for controlling the selection of an
8 advertisement from a plurality of advertisements to be integrated in a
9 message; and
10 a conversation system for controlling the presentation of at least one
11 character along with the delivery of said message integrated with said
12 advertisement to the user.

1 84. The system according to claim 83 wherein said advertisement system
2 further comprises:
3 a user profile database for storing demographic information on a plurality of users
4 and for storing an indication of said plurality of advertisements that have been delivered
5 to said plurality of users.

1 85. The system according to claim 83 wherein said advertisement system
2 further comprises:
3 an advertiser profile database for storing characteristics of at least one advertiser,
4 wherein said characteristics are at least a one of a fee structure, at least one character type
5 an advertisement may be associated with, and criteria for displaying said advertisement.

1 86. The system according to claim 83 wherein said advertisement system
2 further comprises:
3 an advertisement database for storing said plurality of advertisements and for
4 storing characteristics of said plurality of advertisements.

1 87. The system according to claim 83 wherein said advertisement system
2 further comprises:

3 a character profile database for storing characteristics of said at least one
4 character.

1 88. The system according to claim 83 wherein said advertisement system
2 further comprises:

3 a conversation history database for identifying at least one type of message and at
4 least one type of advertisement to be delivered to the user.

1 89. The system according to claim 83 wherein said advertisement system
2 further comprises:

3 a web engine for receiving requests for Web pages from a plurality of users over
4 said computer network, for forwarding said requests to said conversation system, for
5 receiving generated Web pages from said conversation system, and for sending said
6 generated Web pages through said interface over said computer network to said plurality
7 of users.

1 90. The system according to claim 83 wherein said computer network is the
2 Internet.

1 91. A system for delivering advertising, the system comprising:
2 at least one user computer running a browser application having access to at least
3 one server computer via a communications link, said at least one user computer further
4 comprising;
5 a display device for presenting a character, wherein said character
6 communicates a message having an advertisement integrated with said message
7 received from said at least one server computer; and
8 an input device for sending a response to said at least one server computer
9 regarding said message having said integrated advertisement.

1 92. The system according to claim 91 wherein said at least one user computer
2 further comprises:

3 a speaker for displaying as audio output said message having an advertisement
4 integrated with said message communicated by said character.

1 93. The system according to claim 91 wherein said character is displayed on
2 said display device as a rendered character that is one of a cartoon character, a person, an
3 animal, and a non-living object.

1 94. The system according to claim 91 wherein said at least one user computer
2 is a gaming device.

1 95. The system according to claim 91 wherein said message having an
2 advertisement integrated with said message is displayed as text on said display device.